

AUTOPSY

An autopsy is required in all violent or unattended deaths to determine the approximate time and precise cause of death. An unattended death is one for which there was no preexisting illness, medical condition, or reasonable explanation.

Where there is reason to believe foul play is involved in a human death, and when a request is made by an authorized agency, SDFL personnel may assist a forensic pathologist during an autopsy. Contact the SDFL Director with this request at 605-773-3673.

Package, seal, and label all items recovered, making sure the pathologist/investigator describes the contents and places his/her mark of identification on each item or container. It is important that the investigator in attendance be equipped with adequate appropriate containers and sealing supplies to properly package clothing, body fluids, organs, hair samples, fingernail scrapings, etc.

Points of interest:

Follow proper packaging procedures for all items in accordance with information provided in this manual.

Pay special attention to wet clothing that must be air dried and possibly frozen to preserve evidence.

Bloodspatter evidence on clothing may be lost if clothing is not properly dried prior to freezing.

